

# HELP WANTED:

## Highlights from the Fourth Quarter, 2004 Louisiana Job Vacancy Survey

### Alexandria Regional Findings

Louisiana Department of Labor  
Developed by the Research & Statistics Division  
for the Office of Workforce Development



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# WHERE are the vacancies?

## Alexandria Vacancies by Occupational Group

Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Employment in Occupation	Percent Requiring More than a High School Diploma	Percent Requiring at Least Some Work Experience	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Sales & Related	493	10,020	0.0%	68.1%	\$7.00
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	474	4,870	0.0%	100.0%	\$10.00
Computer & Mathematical Science	331	610	100.0%	100.0%	\$14.42
Food Preparation & Serving Related	236	7,690	0.0%	60.0%	\$5.15
Office & Administrative Support	174	15,680	4.6%	73.6%	\$8.00
Business & Financial Operations	163	2,430	100.0%	100.0%	\$15.87
Healthcare Support	154	3,950	76.4%	52.8%	\$6.00
Construction & Extraction	115	5,120	29.6%	100.0%	\$10.00
Personal Care & Service	102	3,570	0.0%	100.0%	\$5.25
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	83	3,290	64.9%	64.9%	\$5.15
Production	78	4,380	30.5%	100.0%	\$10.00
Management	51	4,970	21.8%	100.0%	\$24.37
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	51	7,800	100.0%	63.3%	\$13.00
Protective Service	9	4,080	0.0%	25.0%	\$11.96
Community & Social Services	6	1,870	100.0%	100.0%	\$10.00
Transportation & Material Moving	3	8,190	100.0%	100.0%	\$16.35
Non-Classifiable Occupations	2	NA	0.0%	100.0%	\$11.51
Architecture & Engineering	0	1,170	NA	NA	NA
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	0	680	NA	NA	NA
Education, Training & Library	0	6,840	NA	NA	NA
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	1,720	NA	NA	NA
Legal	0	730	NA	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	520	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total, All Occupational Groups</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>100,180</b>	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>81.3%</b>	<b>\$8.00</b>

## Job titles with many openings

Cashiers – 362 openings  
 Data Entry Keyers – 326 openings  
 Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists – 264 openings  
 Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics – 210 openings  
 Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants – 151 openings  
 Training and Development Specialists – 109 openings  
 Cooks, Restaurant – 107 openings  
 Personal and Home Care Aides – 102 openings  
 Cooks, Short Order – 86 openings

## Alexandria Vacancies by Industry Group

Industry Group	Number of Vacancies	Industry Employment	Vacancy Rate	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Leisure & Hospitality	752	9,346	8.0%	\$5.25
Professional & Business Services	670	7,555	8.9%	\$12.75
Manufacturing	518	5,604	9.2%	\$8.00
Education & Health Services	213	32,673	0.7%	\$8.25
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	202	19,747	1.0%	\$5.15
Construction	106	6,805	1.6%	\$11.00
Financial Activities	51	4,442	1.2%	\$7.50
Other Services	12	2,242	0.5%	\$5.50
Information	0	1,754	0.0%	NA
Natural Resources & Mining	0	2,675	0.0%	NA
<b>Total, All Industry Groups</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>92,843</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>\$8.00</b>

## WHAT do these numbers mean ?

There were 2,524 job vacancies in the Alexandria Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA 6), for a vacancy rate of 2.7 percent. This means that for every 100 jobs, almost three positions were vacant at the time of the survey. The Sales & Related occupational group had the highest number of vacancies (493), comprising approximately 20 percent of all reported openings. The Installation, Maintenance & Repair occupational group took second place in the number of vacancies (474) for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004 survey.

The Leisure & Hospitality industry group had the largest number of vacancies (752), accounting for 30 percent of the vacancies in this survey. One of the occupational groups with a large number of vacancies that can be found in this industry group is Food Preparation & Serving Related.

Education and experience requirements varied widely across occupational groups. Food Preparation & Serving Related; Sales & Related; Installation, Maintenance & Repair; Office & Administrative Support; and Personal Care & Service occupational groups had the smallest number of job vacancies requiring more than a high school diploma, while Computer & Mathematical Science, Business & Financial Operations, and Healthcare Practitioner & Technical occupational groups reported 100 percent of their vacancies required more than a high school diploma. Approximately 80 percent of the job vacancies require at least some work experience. Wages varied by occupation from a median wage of \$5.15 per hour in Food Preparation & Serving Related to a median wage of \$24.37 for Management. Median hourly wage for all occupational groups was \$8.00.

# A SNAPSHOT

## of Alexandria job vacancies

Overall, Alexandria area employers were seeking experienced workers for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004. Just over 80 percent of all reported vacancies required at least some previous work experience. Approximately one in four vacancies required some experience in any field, 32 percent required up to two years experience in the same field, and approximately one in four vacancies required more than two years of experience in the same field.

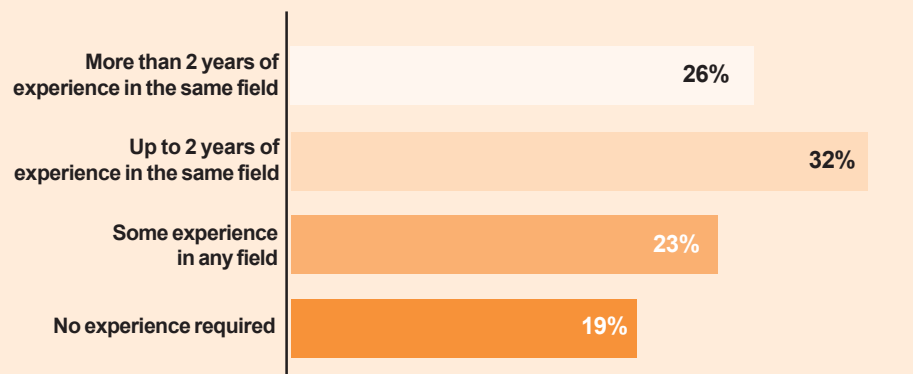
Approximately 20 percent of Alexandria area job vacancies required a four-year college degree, while less than one percent required an advanced degree. Educational attainment of a high school diploma or less was required by 62 percent of the job vacancies reported. Seven percent of the vacancies required a two-year college degree and 11 percent of the vacancies required vocational training or certification.

One in four job vacancy positions paid \$5.15 or less per hour, while 16 out of 100 job vacancies paid over \$16.00 per hour. Twenty-five percent of the job vacancy positions paid from \$7.01 to \$10.00 and 17 percent paid \$5.16 to \$7.00. Eleven out of 100 job vacancy positions paid \$10.01 to \$13.00 per hour.

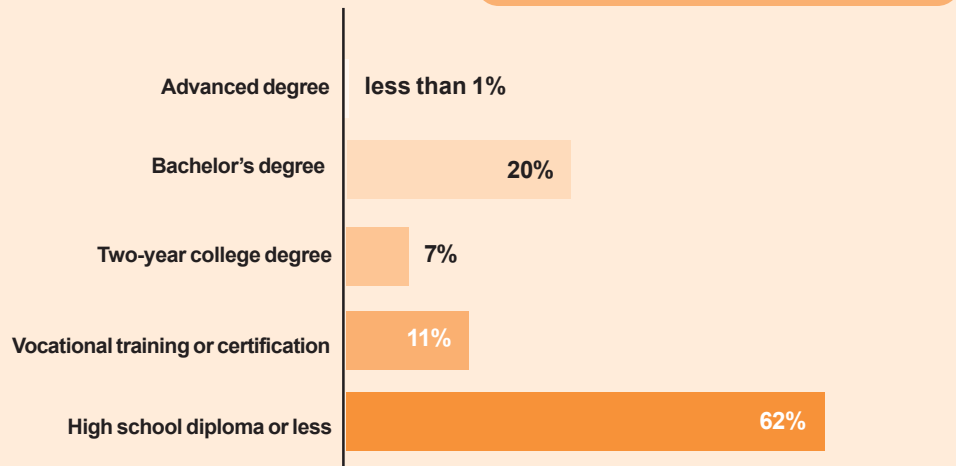
### How are experience, education and pay related?

Tenure is a way of identifying how experience, education and pay relate to one another. Employees with higher years of tenure usually have higher levels of education, more experience, and are paid more, while employees with less education and experience find themselves in low paying jobs that have more turnover. Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics 2004 Employee Tenure report, jobs with noticeably high employee tenure included management occupations (6.0 years), architecture and engineering occupations (5.8 years), protection service occupations (5.5 years), education, training, and library occupations (5.1 years), production occupations (5.0 years), and healthcare practitioner and technical occupations (4.5 years). Jobs with somewhat low employee tenure included food preparation and serving related occupations (1.8 years), personal care and service occupations (2.7 years), sales and related occupations (2.8 years), and healthcare support occupations (2.9 years).

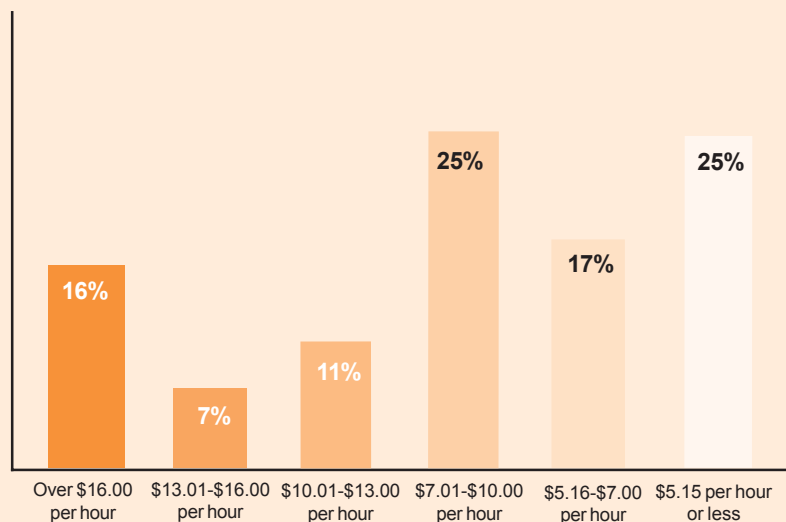
### How much experience do Alexandria job vacancies require?



### How much education do Alexandria job vacancies require?



### How much do Alexandria job vacancies pay?



### What is the difference between an *industry* and an *occupation*?

An industry is a group of establishments, categorized according to the goods or services they provide. For purposes of this study, many of the industry sectors are grouped together to provide summary information. For instance, the industry sectors of Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities are combined to form a summary industry group called Trade, Transportation & Utilities.

An occupational group is a group of workers, categorized according to the skills they have and what they do on the job. For example, Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations is one occupational group that includes many different types of occupations such as Dentists, Optometrists, Therapists, Veterinarians, Diagnostic related Technologists and Technicians, and Medical Records and Health Information Technicians. These are just a few of the occupations you can find in this occupational group.

Each industry contains a variety of occupations, and many occupations may be found in every industry. Using Healthcare Services (part of the summary industry group of Education & Health Services) as an example, you may find the following occupations in a hospital: doctors, therapists, office managers, medical records clerks, housekeepers, nurses, food preparation workers, and maintenance workers.

# What did EMPLOYERS say?

Employers' Responses to the Open-Ended Question:  
*"In trying to fill this position,  
 what is the greatest difficulty you have faced, if any?"\**

Reported Difficulty	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<i>"We have been unable to find qualified applicants and/or qualified applicants with experience."</i>	9	15.5%
<i>"Qualified applicants will not work for the compensation package we offer."</i>	2	3.4%
<i>"We have been unable to find applicants with the specific experience/training/skills that we are seeking."</i>	9	15.5%
<i>"There is a shortage of people in the occupation."</i>	8	13.8%
<i>"Some aspect of the job is undesirable to applicants (such as shifts, weekends, heavy lifting)."</i>	4	6.9%
<i>"The work ethic of people, once they are hired is unacceptable." This included comments on appearance, social skills, attitude, maturity, and dependability.</i>	3	5.2%
<i>"Turnover – keeping people once they have been hired is the biggest problem."</i>	3	5.2%
<i>"Finding people that want to work. Not enough applications submitted."</i>	6	10.3%
<i>Some other difficulty mentioned.</i>	6	10.3%
<i>"No reported difficulty in filling vacancy."</i>	8	13.8%
<b>Total Responding to this Question</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>99.9%</b>

\* Confidentiality concerns precluded publishing employers' verbatim responses. However, an LDOL analyst reviewed all responses to the question above, grouped similar responses together, then re-worded the similar responses into one representative sentence or phrase, as shown above. Data shown in this table are unweighted. Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.



Major Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Hiring Demand Index*	Median Number of Days Position was Vacant
Architecture & Engineering	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	83	2.51%	Low	3
Business & Financial Operations	163	6.71%	High	18.5
Community & Social Services	6	0.34%	Low	7
Computer & Mathematical Science	59	9.67%	High	21
Construction & Extraction	115	2.24%	Low	60
Education, Training & Library	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Food Preparation & Serving Related	236	3.07%	Low	90
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical	51	0.65%	Low	60
Healthcare Support	154	3.90%	Average	14
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	474	9.74%	High	30
Legal	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Management	105	2.11%	Low	14
Non-Classifiable Occupations	2	NA	NA	7
Office & Administrative Support	391	2.49%	Low	21
Personal Care & Service	102	2.86%	Low	28
Production	78	1.78%	Average	21
Protective Service	9	0.22%	Low	13.5
Sales & Related	493	4.92%	High	30
Transportation & Material Moving	3	0.04%	Low	30
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>2,524</b>	<b>2.52%</b>		<b>21</b>

Taking all of the labor shortage indicators together (vacancy rate, hiring demand index, and the length of time vacancies remained unfilled), there was no evidence of severe labor shortages in any occupational group. The overall vacancy rate for the Alexandria area for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2004 was 2.52 percent, and positions stayed vacant for a median of 21 days, indicating that employers were able to fill a manageable number of vacancies in a reasonable amount of time. There were two occupational groups that appeared to be experiencing mild shortages: Installation, Maintenance & Repair and Sales & Related. They had a relatively high vacancy rate, high hiring demand index, and vacancies that stayed open for a period of time above the median time period.

\*The Hiring Demand Index indicates whether demand for workers in an occupational group is more than what we would expect from turnover levels alone. A "high" score on the Hiring Demand Index means that, all else equal, a labor shortage is **likely**, because there are more openings than we would expect to see from normal turnover alone. A "low" score means that a labor shortage is **unlikely**, because there are **not** more openings than we would expect to see from turnover alone. See the back cover of this report for more details on this measure.

Are there  
**LABOR SHORTAGES**  
 in Alexandria?

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fourth Quarter 2004 Job Vacancy Survey Findings are available for the state of Louisiana as well as all eight regional labor market areas (RLMAs). To order copies, or for more information, please contact the Louisiana Department of Labor's Research and Statistics Unit at (225) 342-3141, or toll-free at (888) 302-7662. You may also download any Job Vacancy Survey product from our Web site: [www.LAWORKS.net/qm\\_JVS.asp](http://www.LAWORKS.net/qm_JVS.asp).

### TECHNICAL NOTES

for the Fourth Quarter 2004  
Job Vacancy Survey

#### THE SAMPLE

The Job Vacancy Survey was based on a random sample of Louisiana business establishments covered by Louisiana's unemployment insurance (UI) tax laws. The survey was conducted in a cooperative endeavor between Louisiana State University and Louisiana Department of Labor. The sample was stratified by firm size, region (including the eight regional labor market areas in Louisiana) and industry classification. This sample excludes certain types of establishments: small businesses with self-employed owners and some non-profit and religious organizations, which are not covered by UI tax laws. In addition, the sample is limited to **private employers only. The vacancies reported in this study do not include openings with any federal, state, or local government entities in Louisiana.** The total sample size was 8,139. The overall response rate for this survey was 38.7%.

#### JOB VACANCY RATES

Vacancy rates are computed as the number of vacancies in an occupation divided by the total employment in that occupation. A vacancy rate of five percent means that for every 100 jobs, five were vacant at the time of the survey.

#### HIRING DEMAND INDEX

The Hiring Demand Index presented in this report measures demand for labor over and above the normal demand due to turnover. This measure, first constructed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, is computed as follows:

(Job Vacancy Rate in the Occupation / Job Vacancy Rate in all occupations)

divided by

(Turnover rate in the occupation / Turnover rate in all occupations)

Job vacancy rates are calculated as discussed above, and national turnover rates were provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. They were calculated using Current Population Survey (CPS) Job Tenure Supplement microdata.

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